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AN, OTHER POEMS
AND A PREFACE

MARIE C. STOPES

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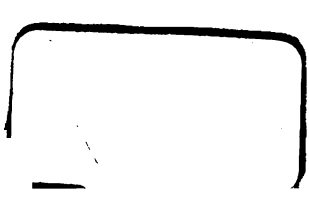

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MAN, OTHER POEMS

AND

A PREFACE

BY

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D.Sc., PH.D., F.L.S.

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"Love made me Poet,
And this I writt;
My harte did do yt,
And not my witt."

(From an old inscription in Burford Church, written by a simple woman on her husband's tombstone.)

PREFACE

A NOTE ON POETRY

It may appear presumptuous for me to publish a volume of verse, because I am scientific; and my science moreover is an abstruse and remote branch of Palæontology of which the jargon is technical enough to confound any but a trained specialist.

But I do not think it is really presumptuous—and for the following reasons. Years ago I mapped out a life for myself which I hoped to live, for it seemed an ideal one. I planned to spend twenty years on scientific research, then twenty years on philosophy, and then twenty years in the direct service of humanity, meanwhile writing one poem in which to embody a life's experience of the universe, and when the poem was finished—to die! To-day, after spending ten years on scientific research, and incorrigibly

writing poetry at intervals all the time, I feel impelled to publish this volume because experience has tempered my faith in exact schedules. My life *may* take somewhat the course my childhood dreamed it should, but I may die to-morrow, and meantime there is something I very much desire to say of poetry.

It is my belief that poetry ought never to be a human being's avowed occupation, because, if it is, there is a very great temptation to write it! And of a certainty poetry ought never to be written; it ought, it must, write itself.

Only in poetry can humanity find expression for the profounder truths which escape the stolid periods of prose. While scientific—*i.e. relative*—truth requires a presentation exact, precise, even mathematical, such as prose can give, absolute truth is conveyed directly from heart to heart and, if it can be secured at all, must be enmeshed in words touched with magic. In the natural sciences — Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and the like—though *exactitude* (which is a variety of truthfulness) is of the very essence of their ambition, the limitations of their fields forces on them a large untruthfulness. Each

separate science may—nay, *must*—confine itself to the objects within its own boundaries. "Microscopists may ignore the stars." Scientists are therefore restricted to a section of life's activities.

But a poet's realm is universal—his business is with the infinite and the eternally true; he can be in touch with the vibrations of the eternal ether which propagate the beauty or terror of the universe.

The chemist goes to his test-tubes, the geologist to the rocks, for his truths. Where is the poet to go? To the spaces shut apart from the commotion of matter, where his mind's receiver may synchronize with the everlasting verities. These he may find in his own heart, in the pity and beauty of the lives of mankind, in the still and radiant glories of solitary places. What is commonly called Nature, and what is really the life of this world unspoiled by man's barbarities, sings to him silently; and the poet who is attuned draws from her actual currents of thought — or, perhaps one should say, of cosmic feeling which can scarcely be described as thought.

What part then does "literary" training and the loving study of words and rhythms play? Does it

not teach one to write poetry? No. It serves only to increase—in relation to words and sounds—the sensitiveness, the delicacy of the mind that awaits the cosmic inspiration; just as each improvement of the telephone or wireless telegraphy does not originate wise or humorous remarks, but only reproduces more perfectly or more audibly the words uttered by some living soul. Each poem is a flashing message—a communication between humanity and something vaster—whose language is incommensurable with common speech; and to my mind and in my experience each poem is instantaneous, or it is marred.

The following trifling incident may illustrate my view that poetry is something which flows through one: a something for which the poet's hand is merely the medium of expression. I had been labouring all day in Tokio with the practical difficulties of a new donkey-engine and apparatus for sectioning fossils. Weary and depressed I had returned to a solitary dinner, and after it I had remained passive and worn, in a grey and very limited atmosphere of mundane thoughts. The oil-lamp

smoked, and tainted the air in my little room. My head ached, and my mind was as prosaic as a wearied mind cramped in a narrow space can be. The air became unbearable, and I rose to open the wooden *amado* (shutters) which close Japanese rooms after sundown. The heavy shutters slid back with groans, when, facing me the moment my window was opened, there suddenly sailed out from a heavy cloud the perfect sphere of the full moon in all its silvered radiance. I flung my arms out towards her and cried, "O Moon, poets have sung thee fair Queen of the Night!" and said, as unhesitatingly and quickly as one would speak prose to a friend, the verses on p. 20. After speaking thus directly to the moon herself, the verses sang in my mind, and in a few moments I wrote them down as they now appear, without any verbal change.

Now of course these verses are a mere nothing—a feather fluttering in the wind—but the manner of their materialization lends them an interest. No one could have been more wearied, more materially-minded, less capable of writing even doggerel, than I was that night. The pretty trifle was floating in

the air unmaterialized, and it flowed through my mind and hand as the ink flowed through my pen.

Sometimes the muse seizes one by the hair of the head, and at the most inconvenient times. In Tokio once, when I was cycling in haste to the University, a poem insisted on being born. I resisted it, but in the end had simply to get off the bicycle and write it down; otherwise the thing would have been mutilated, and the broken fragments of it would have rattled about in my brain, making all scientific work impossible for the day. The moment it was written down it was forgotten. The poem "Tokio Snow," on p. 16, was written in this way; but as I was not perfectly attuned to it at the time, it required some polishing afterwards.

It is not only the dainty trifles, the thistledown and the feathers of poetry, that float or flow through this world, waiting the heart and hand that may give them human words. I am sure that the greatest poems that can be written, the most "inspired," are conceived by the poet in this instantaneous way.

Bunthornes may sit and scratch their heads for rhymes; literary men, seriously interested in words,

may chisel and refine their verse and produce a statue-poetry which may attain even a superb beauty. But poetry that is *alive*, the real thing, takes the poet as its tool, impels him, and "writes" itself. The poet only transcribes the words that are singing and surging in his brain; perhaps at the time he does not even notice whether the lines rhyme or not. Afterwards, when the now materially incarnate thing is sent to the typist and the printer in the sordid round it has to travel before it can reach the hearts of other men, the poet may find that here and there he has "missed connections," and obviously failed to record the right word. Yet the more vividly the first vision flamed within him, the less he afterwards has to change. It is my belief that a perfect poem, however complex in rhythm or in rhyme, would spring into a form requiring no later touch or alteration.

Sometimes after the first flame of vision, the throb of conception, there is a period of gestation before the living idea is enmeshed in words and ready for birth into the material world. But here again the poet is only the instrument of a force outside himself. The poem "Man" (p. 3 in this volume) came through

me in this way. Six months before a word of it was written, I was lying in the country as is described in the opening lines. Suddenly I had a vision of the whole poem. My heart throbbed and dilated with the joy of it. I had paper and pencil with me, but no fraction of the vision was expressible in words; it was as though I saw it in a dream in which I was dumb. The pictures lay deep in my mind, and during the following six months I was hard at work on serious writing and scientific research. Then suddenly, the day I was leaving a seaside lodging, late in the morning, after I ought to have begun packing, the poem's birth began. The lines whispered, then sang in my ears in swift succession; they had to be written down. Lunch was due, and packing became urgent, for the cab was to come in an hour; but still the lines sang and echoed, verbally complete. I had to throw my things into my trunk and drive to the station. There followed a few hours' journey in a crowded train, but in the railway carriage the poem surged more swiftly than I could write it down. I have only changed half-a-dozen words since the day it took shape.

PREFACE

The critic, who I believe is conventionally captious, may ask, Why, if I claim external and direct inspiration for poets, are my own verses not finer? The reason is that I am as yet an imperfect instrument. My own rhythms are not yet fine enough nor large enough, and perhaps never will be, for the greatest waves of divine thought to pass through me.

Not being a critic, I have neither power nor right to speak of the work of others, but if poems vibrating through the ether are perceived even by me who am overwhelmed with other work, busy in lines of thought as remote and hard as natural science, it seems to me that it must be one of the fundamental facts of the universe—that the poet is not himself the creator, but is merely the tool in the hands of the poem.

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MAN, AND OTHER POEMS

MAN

THE heat of noon quivers along the ground,
And, rustling through the stiff-belled heath, the sound
Of drowsy bees on heavy-burdened wings
Rivals the soaring lark that distant sings.
The fine-haired grass feels hot beneath my back,
And time is marked by pistol-shots that crack
When ripened gorse-pods suddenly explode
And shoot their blackened bullets o'er the road.
A line of silver shows beyond the birch,
Whose dancing leaves half hide the fixed grey church
Set in the opal distance of the sky.
Upon a sun-kissed knoll, dreaming, I lie
In pungent airs the ancient pines exude
While in the long hot hours they stand and brood.

MAN

Earth's sloping bosom stretches from my feet
To rise again where sky and distance meet.
The blue above is infinitely deep,
The white cloud-mountains perilously steep;
Below them here, with butterflies and flowers,
I've mused upon my life through age-long hours.
What, then, of life? Have I a life apart
From thine, O Man, who broke, then healed my heart?
My reading of the world and life must be
Dependent on the place allotted thee.

What a fine pageant do you make, O Man,
In your embodiments! And as I scan
Your thousand faces, so the world is changed,
And by your aspects life is rearranged.
In the blue haze that quivers 'neath the trees
I see the wraiths of my past selves, and these
Are all accompanied by fragment-dreams
Of what unfinished man to girlhood seems.

Myself at seventeen is in the wood,
Shy as a fawn, and like a schoolgirl—good.

MAN

Man canters in the distance through the trees
With lance at rest and shield against his knees.
His armour scarce is loosened, save to rest
When over-wearied by some noble quest.
A virgin queen in peril, or perchance
The Holy Grail itself, inspires his lance.
Then I do play the part of perilled Queen,
And as he rescues me, I scarcely lean
Upon the steel-cold succour of his arm.
Through the dark nights we journey, from all harm
The bright blade of his naked sword doth keep
Us both in safety while we lie in sleep.
Returned to my own country, all I give,
Rewarding him, is one white rose. I live
For years his lady, while he fights abroad—
And I have never even kissed my lord.

Now I at eighteen take a new delight
In knowing, if I stoop, facing the light,
The still dark waters will reflect my face
Mysteriously and lend its curves a grace.
Man-troubadour comes through the wood, and finds
Me at my toilette, and he lilies binds

MAN

Between the lustred webs of my dark hair,
And tells me that he finds me naiad-fair.
But I spring up and run with laughing glee,
And he, pursuing, finds that I can flee
In earnest. So he tires, and dreams all night
Beneath the oak through which I took my flight;
And when by sunrise I have not returned,
He knows that his devoted love is spurned.
While I laugh on within the sparkling shade
With star-white blossoms ever new arrayed.

Myself at nineteen am with jewels dressed,
While filmy rose-silk flutters o'er my breast.
With other maidens walking in a glade,
I coyly wait within its arboured shade
While cavaliers come, dressed in shining silk,
And press with kisses hands as white as milk,
Whispering softly that a little waist
Is most attractive when 'tis tightly laced.
From Man I learn the body's rounded curves
Tingle, beneath their rosy flesh, with nerves.
Then Man, who seems to be removed by fate,
Bids *au revoir* abruptly at the gate.

MAN

When I am twenty Man has come to life:
And a young student, whittling with his knife,
Saying his Latin verses o'er, I meet;
And he and I exchange long looks too sweet.
We clasp each other's hands, both brown and warm;
We shield each other from the wordy storm
Of academic wrath o'er tasks undone,
And know that Life's real lesson has begun.
The strong-limbed creature runs his college race;
Mud flecks his hairy calves, so swift his pace;
The sweat pours down his forehead to his nose
As round the course, ahead of all, he goes;
While I observe, with throbbing heart of joy,
That Man is something more than larger boy.

Man's aspect grows and changes swiftly now:
Bewildering varieties allow
No respite to my thoughts of self: they woo
My sense with words intoxicating—true?
A Captive-Man flatters my girlish pride,
For all my friends are envious of a bride.
Man is the source of carriages and gems,
The force that rows my boat upon the Thames.

MAN

Man, clad in tailor's garments, seems as tame
As a devoted dog, answering his name.
Why not possess a creature thus endowed?
And so to Man my girlish life is vowed.
As victrix, crowned with scented orange-flower,
My triumph is secure for one short hour.
At dark, protean Man changes once more,
And, tailor's garments thrown upon the floor,
A satyr dances on them, wild and free,
And centres his coarse revelry in me.
When morning dawns the world is no more fair,
And every bedroom seems a wild-beast's lair,
And every bride a creature in a snare,
And every laugh an echo of despair.
The pregnant woman's heavy-shackled feet;
The painted faces leering on the street;
The nursing mother gaunt with ill-paid toil—
All make my soul with searing gasps recoil
From Man and his gross bestiality.
I struggle to a sheltering home, Man-free.

Then cloistered in a convent, Man-escaped,
By thoughts of piety my life is shaped.

MAN

The saints and sages fill my mind with peace;
Even the memories of wild tumults cease.
We grow God's flowers within our garden wall,
And live more pure than Eve before the Fall.
The months of quiet healing, mind at rest,
Persuade me that the nun's life is the best.
Hark! Strangely in the quiet rings a cry
With moans of agony, as though to die
Were torment's only hope; and then the wail
Of babe new-born—crushed rose so soon to pale—
Flutters a moment, but the thing is cold
Before it is a single hour old.

Man in another form! So frail, so sweet—
Promise of life for ever incomplete
Could other lives beyond it not unfold
In gentle bodies that his arms might hold.
The single cry of this frail baby-man
Sets my mind seeking once again God's plan
Out in the world, where men and women meet.
I see that all the nuns in my retreat
Could not be there had not some man desired
Some woman, and with seed her body fired.

MAN

In simple gown I set about my task,
And for a year serve Man, and do not ask
If it be right that he should sit and smoke
While women scrub. My dormant mind awoke,
And being rid of its warped terror's strain,
Now Man appears a human thing again.
I watch him at his labour in the mine;
I watch him shaping from the rough-hewn pine
The shelter and the comforts of a home;
I watch him spanning the completed dome
Of a great temple he has raised to God.
I find a soul within the merest clod
Who works to win his children's daily bread;
But yet my own soul's joy in Man has fled.

At last *you* come, O Man of my desire!
You turn the blood within my veins to fire;
You turn the dusk of night to radiant flame;
You drown in sweeping joy the coward shame.
You found me blindly seeking Life's true laws,
While you were hewing deep at evil's cause;
You found me working hard in solitude,
Wrestling with problems but half understood.

MAN

Winding the warp alone upon my loom,
The threads fell loosely scattered in the room.
Your shuttle flew between those threads of mine
The woof closed up, with added line on line,
And we together weave firm cloth of gold,
Fit garment here God's image to enfold.

The visioned pageant in the woodland fades;
Like blue-veined mist it floats across the glades,
And still I lie upon earth's flower-clad breast,
Warm-cushioned 'neath the sky, on grassy crest.
Scattering the drowsy bees I hear a sound
That makes my blood leap with one eager bound,
And surge the cheek that you will stoop to kiss
(Your step alone is guarantee for this).
You come! you come! No visioned wraith, but flesh
Pulsating, my twin-soul within its mesh.
My soul towards thee strains at every part,
And as we lie, not only heart on heart,
And tingling hands clasping swift tender hands
(Soft whispered words, exchanging love's demands),

But each mind entering, permeating, ranged
Within the other. All the view is changed.
Crystal of fusion from Man's-Woman's soul
The spirit finds a vision of life whole!

ASPIRATIONS

In the still silences that spoke
Straight up to heaven one night there went
A fluted column of grey smoke.
I watched it idly from my tent
Pillar the sky in its ascent
Toward the starry firmament.
Then out of heaven a wind was sent—
Mere summer breath, but the column bent,
And curling wreathes of smoke did fly
That to the stones soft haloes lent.
For God, it seems, had never meant
So light a shaft to pierce the sky.

THE FRIEND

In the eyes of my friend
As he speaks to me,
Mirrored, reflected, I sometimes see,
Deep in their depth and beneath his love,
The image of God.

The Highest does send
His vast mystery
Veiled in the flesh that we love to see;
And while we fancy Him far above,
We have kissed our God.

MARJORIE

Laughter and stillness meet at the gates
Of thy lips, Beloved.
Joy and reverence were the mates
Who conceived thy mind.
Tenderness playing with Strength, in thy hands
Are joined, beloved—
Shadow and sunshine in the bands
Of thy hair confined.

Whiteness and redness in thy soft cheek
Melt into one;
Wise and simple the words you speak
All in a breath.
Enchantress and saint in thy daily life
Each other shun.
Wayward thou art, but when pledged a wife,
Faithful till death.

TOKIO SNOW

Clothed in soft wreathing clouds,
The bright full moon arose
Between the twisted pines,
Over the grey-walled moats,
Where the reflection floats
Of gnarled grey trees that stand
Guarding grey palaces.

Glancing adown the world,
She saw there, mirrored clear
On the still water's face,
In beauty all alone,
The vision of her own
Entrancing loveliness,
Half hid by her light robes.

Thus tempted to see more
Of her own beauty bright,
She cast her draperies
With swinging motions swift,
Enlarging every rift.
Their loosely-woven form
Scattered to fragments light.

Softly they fell away,
Those garments of a queen,
Who robed in vestments more
Diaphanous than silk,
More royal white than milk.
Softly they fell from heaven,
And clothed the earth instead.

The starry fragments hung
Half floating in the air,
Choosing their resting-place;
Then lodged on temple eaves,
Or spangled dark green leaves
Of thickly tufted pines
And copper lotuses.

TOKIO SNOW

When all had found their place,
Wondering, the moon once more
Questioned her mirror's face,
And saw with proud delight,
Framed in the snowy white,
Her perfect circle's charm
Holding the heavenly court.

Soon the hot sun began
To climb the royal blue,
And—ere men soiled the world—
He gazed with glowing eye,
Till the shy snow did fly,
Chased by his burning fire,
Back to the heavens again.

Swift in the sunshine's warmth
Glittered wet orbs of light
On quivering pine-tree boughs,
While all the smaller trees
Were fountains in the breeze,
And shimmering crystal gems
Fell in bright sparkling showers.

TOKIO SNOW

Now swift beneath the trees,
Scarcely perceptible,
Yet upward curving, rise
The softest clouds of steam
Which hardly real seem.
While fair Diana sleeps,
She needs her draperies.

TO THE MOON

Poets have sung thee,
  Fair Queen of the Night.
Poets have loved thee,
  And poets were right.
For what can compare
  In the heavens with thee,
And what is so fair
  As thy beams on the sea?

Thy passionate lover,
  The sun, who does chase,
But yet wins thee never,
  To gaze on thy face
Would give all his splendour
  Of crimson and gold,
His beams and aurora,
  Thy form to enfold.

TO THE MOON

Wise Queen of the Night,
  Thou hast loved an Ideal,
And kept thy pure beauty
  From taint of the Real!
Yet dost thou ne'er dream
  Of the warmth and the bliss
That comes of the meeting
  Of two in a kiss?

THE STORM*

HOWICK,
January 12, 1913.

To Earl Grey.

WITH sublimated lead the clouds were weighed,
Sombred with heaviness that made them press
Black-purple, heaving sides towards the sea.
With lashing tongues of air the waves were flayed,
And fringing waters, yielding to the stress,
Were whipped to foam that gathered hurriedly—

That gathered, fleck on fleck, until amassed
The bubbled froth stood cliff-high in the cove,
And the fringed tongue of every entering wave
Was lost beneath the shaky pile, crevassed.
Tossed on the crest of moving ridge, it hove
Up to the level where the wind did rave.

* This appeared in the *Poetry Review* for February, 1913.

THE STORM

Spume snatched from crested waters by sharp air,
Then, tempest-tossed, broke up in sodden rifts,
Thrown down, disdainful, by the force that burst
The margin bubbles hissing everywhere,
Till knee-high in the road shook foaming drifts
That looked like snow, but were the sea accursed.

Clinging reluctant to the seaward face
Of cliffs they smothered with their writhing mass,
Cluster on cluster strung the weltering coils
Of foam, land-driv'n, which strove to keep its place
Out in the ocean—like two ships, alas!
Caught also in the Storm-Gods evil toils.

Two gallant ships were driven with the foam,
All piled together in one little bay,
Spumed out in wrath from waters that were home,
Shivering on land as dawned a steely day.

NIGHT

Scented shadows of the moon
Lurk in gardens rich with flowers,
Where the passing drowsy hours
Leave their perfumes in the gloom.
In the violet-shaded dusk
Vibrant air has sheltered coigns,
Where the heavy odours dream
Undisturbed by streaming airs.
In the moonlight's purple shade
Sleep the scents of heavenly night,
Till a shining petal falls,
Making swirling eddies bright.
Then sharp whiteness gleams in mauve,
Stirring heavy airs to flight—
Airs that carry to the light
Sweet, narcotic essences
From the souls that lived and loved
In this garden's distances.

FAITH

I STAND alone among tall trees and breathe
The scented breath of night,
And doubts that seemed so solid in clear day
Are reft by the sweet silence of the moon,
And seem transparent wraiths of silver mist.
And so the moonbeams teach my soul to pray.

DELIGHT

THERE is in this world a wonderful thing,
Of faeries' design, that eludes and delights
That dances on radiant butterfly's wing,
That hovers and floats over magical heights.
In shadowy pools where forget-me-nots stand
Its wonderful calm is reflected at eve.
When Spring throws her mantle of flowers o'er the land,
It hides in the patterns the blossoms do weave.
But the home where it nestles each evening at dusk
Is the heart of the beautiful soul that I love;
It breathes in the breath that is sweeter than musk,
And looks out from the eyes that are tender with love.

On butterfly's wing and on magical height,
In the delicate flower, the glory of spring—
In the heart of my dear one I surely am right
To feel and to see but one exquisite thing—
One glory, one single, stupendous Delight.

HUMAN LOVE

WONDROUS is love that with a steady glow
Unflickering through the wind of life can go;
But if the flame burn low, and then once more
Shines brilliantly, 'tis lovelier than before.

Wondrous the love on one high note that sings
Without a break; but song whose echo clings,
Touches the minor key in its refrain
And makes us ache to hear its chords again.

Wondrous the love in summer-time that dwells
Through all its periods; but the flowering dells
Are sweetest in the springs that come each year
After the passing of the winters drear.

Wondrous the love that like a mountain lake
Lies deeply still, with on its face no break

HUMAN LOVE

Of rippling tide; but the wave-crested sea
With ebb and flow more passionate must be.

Wondrous is love untouched by any pain;
But wounded love that gathers strength again
Is doubly precious, like a life regiven
From bed of sickness by a gracious Heaven.

Wondrous the love that never has been wronged,
And love that for forgiveness never longed;
But those who suffered and forgave are they
Who know the sweetest words that love can say.

Wondrous, divine, is love that changes never;
But human love that stirs with great endeavour,
That has its flood and ebb times, that can sing
On many notes, with many a lovely spring
Following on wintry cold—such love be mine.
I rather would be human than divine!

MARRIAGE

A STREAM of sweet content, whereon do float
The jewelled flowers of passion to the sea
Of deep and everlasting memory.

A high-walled castle, girt by silver moat
Within the sheltered refuge of whose keep
The princess of delight does ever sleep.

A spirit's union that is old, yet new,
As satisfying as the green of trees,
Renewed by heaven each evening like the breeze.

A crystal ball, that like a drop of dew
Reflects the spaciousness of heaven's dome
Within the little corner of a home.

STORM CLOUDS

Storm clouds driven by the wind
Crowd the sky and hide the sun,
Passing when their work is done—
Still the heavens are blue, we find.

Anger 'gainst the one we loved
Like a cloud in April's sky
Is remembered, for it proved
How unchanged deep love does lie

THE RIFT

I LOVED you!
And you doubted that I loved,
Questioned till I could not answer more.
I would not sue
For your belief in what I well had proved,
And so you left me when your heart was sore.

You loved me!
That I never once could doubt,
Though your unbelief was cruel pain.
I could see
Your reason—thought the danger we would rout;
And yet you left me thus, nor came again.

THE IDEALIST'S LOVE

I LOVED my lover for the Love's dear sake.
Without reproach from *his* lips I could take
The kiss that in my dreams was Love's own kiss;
And in my dreams it gave me perfect bliss.

The kisses that I longed for every day
Were burning sweet, to chase my pain away—
The pain of loving Love, and finding here
Only a loving man, however dear.

My lover hurt me, but I would not moan:
For Love was mine, and I was his alone.
What though my lover as a mortal man
Did break his troth?—no mortal ever can

Do all he would. I had no wish to blame,
And kissed his lying lips next day the same.
Thus to my lover I was true, because
Truth in great love is one of Love's great laws.

FAREWELL

Take all I have to give and leave me bare
If you but wear my love against your heart.
I would not wish to know it anywhere
More high; and all the world may see it there.
But, I beseech you, hide from the sun's glare
The wound that has not healed where we did part.
Over it wear a rose so white and fair
That none can see whence the red blood-drops start
That stain our lives, and drop with slow despair
Over the memories that hourly tear,
With ever deepening fangs, our flesh apart.

THE SUN

The same bright sun that made the world so fair
But yesterday, to-day, with cruel glare
Scorches my heart, while on my cheek there lies
The fine white salt of tears its brilliance dries.

AFTER FIVE YEARS

Thus, dear heart, you lay
With your head upon my knee
For one whole summer day,
And beneath us lay the sea.

But five long cruel years
Have passed since that sweet day.
I now see where the tears
Have washed your youth away

Five stolen years of life
Have robbed the treasure-store
Of sweetness; and the strife
Of passions rendered sore

The heart that only knew
And loved the noblest things.
Alas! these five years slew
Thoughts borne on eagle-wings.

AFTER FIVE YEARS

But to-day once more you lie
  With your head upon my knee,
And, oh, thank God! I cry,
  That you came back to me.

THE PAST

Ah! could I capture
But once more that rapture!—
The perfect delight
Of that glorious night,
The enlightening bliss
Of the passionate kiss,
And the words that were said
As the sky glowed red
In the amorous west,
When so fiercely you pressed
My soul to your own.
My body, alone,
Now is callous and cold
To the joys that are old,
For want of my soul
Which that evening you stole.

EYES THAT HAVE WEPT

Eyes that have wept—
Soft eyes with dewy deeps!
There Sorrow brooding while the still night slept
Left as her gift to one with whom she weeps,
That look of heaven's morning girt with cloud,
Whose veils of grey with promise are endowed.

From radiant skies of scorching sapphire light,
Across whose brilliant dome no cloudlet flies,
Triumphant beauty shines and glowing might—
'Tis like the hardness in a youth's bright eyes,
And like to music played upon one note:
Both cloudless sky and eyes that have no tears.

Soft harmonies where memories do float,
Rich beauty to go with us through the years,
Haunt the dear eyes whose shining is of tears.

WINE THAT TURNED TO VINEGAR

To have loved, to have kissed,
And—oh, God!—to have missed
The completion of Love!
To have turned unto one
As the only sun
In one's sky above,

And to find that his beams
Had merely in dreams
Their radiant light!
What so deep as the woe
Of those who did know
The joy of the height?

A more pitiful thing
Than the broken wing
Of a bird that has soared,
Is one driven by fate
To return with hate
Where she once adored.

COMPENSATIONS

In Youth's bright day there shines the sun,
A glowing light—the only one,
Whose glory gilds the roses fair,
In whose bright beams stands Beauty bare.

The great sun sinks—'mid clouds, perchance,
And Nature enters on a trance,
All numb and grey the lightless hour,
In which the shadows deepening lour.

At last come out, bright, one by one,
The silver stars. Each is a sun;
And though their light is all too dim
To see the crimson of the rose,
The silhouette of rosebuds slim
Suggests enough to one who knows.

A CHILD'S SORROW

She was lying
There and crying
All alone,
Her head resting,
Like dove nesting,
On a stone.

All the glory
Of life's story
Swiftly fled,
For her kitten
Had been smitten,
And was dead.

Though her sorrow
By to-morrow
Will be dulled,
'Tis not mended.
Grief's ne'er ended;
'Tis but lulled.

A CHILD'S SORROW

In such fashion
Is love's passion
Turned to woe,
When we learn,
Each in our turn,
The way we go.

The first vision
Of division
Always breaks
With its pain,
What ne'er again
Our life remakes.

THE BEATERS

WITHIN the trellised gloom of scented shade
Cast by the tawny trees on autumn glade
There crouched, entranced together, man and maid,
Smiling o'er earth to sky and unafraid.

Breasting the moist brown fern, a panting hare
Stumbled to rest beside the silent pair;
Driven by terror from its proper lair,
It entered paradise, but knew not where

Its death-winged feet had carried it in fear.
It did not even know that man was near,
Till sounding kiss upon the maiden's ear
Set it once more upon its blind career.

Pity welled up in paradise, and flowed
Around the soft thing on its thorny road;
But with the pity mingled pride that showed
In words, "Thank God, *we* have no terror's load!"

THE BEATERS

Then tap, tap, tap, like distant falling rain;
Like click of needles knitting through a skein;
Like acorns dropping on a stony plain—
Then full the sound of beaters, might and main.

Striking with sticks the strong, resounding trees.
The lovers, in a panic on their knees,
Find flight cut off, and in a moment seize
Their hats. But shots are carried on the breeze.

Discovery is certain, so they wait,
And calmly sit to watch the course of fate.
They know they trespass, and they know the State
Strengthens the arm of keepers who may rate.

The beaters are upon them. In their aisle
A sturdy yokel tramps, doubts for a while,
But then his kindliness and lack of guile
Protect them, and he passes with a smile.

"For zure, maids will be maids, and that one be
The koinde I'd kiss meself! She smiled on me.
I saw him kissin' of her, and he be
A strong-armed 'un. My lord won't know, won't 'e.

THE BEATERS

"My lord has sport full 'nough for this one day;
I'll leave them lovin' critters to their play."
Thus Love preserves her votaries when they
Are either strong or unafraid at bay.

But like a wave the beaters passed along,
Driving with harrying sound the timid throng
Upon the cruel gun-fire of the strong
Who murdered—and forgot that it was wrong.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

THE light of life to saints seems white—
  Clear gleaming white; and in their eyes
There is no colour in that light:
  From God's bright throne it does arise,

And its fair whiteness typifies
  To them but its simplicity,
In which no tainting evil lies,
  So white do they aspire to be.

And for that purpose purge their lives
  Of all they can, save thoughts of heaven,
Unknowing that pure whiteness thrives
  From union of the colours seven.

The light of life indeed is white;
  But 'tis not white simplicity,
For many colours make that light.
  A rainbow glow of hues we see

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Combined together into one
If we but look, as well we may,
Through a bright crystal at the sun.
And full of colours is the day

That seems so silvery and pure.
Even the glowing crimson tone
Of wrong is needed to ensure
That all the beams shall melt to one.

Though white the light in which we live,
Some eyes its rainbow colours see,
And unto them the kind gods give
The power to read life's mystery.

SPRING

Spring is calling all lovers to wake,
  Soft airs are kissing the dewy flowers,
Love is demanding, for his sweet sake,
  That we cast not away the beautiful hours.

Love is demanding, and those who are wise
  Answer with joy and fulfil his commands.
Perchance but to-day is the blue in the skies,
  And the warmth in the love-touch of delicate
    hands.

THE WALTZ

Soft swish of silks through the open door,
Swift sliding shoes on the polished floor,
Rustle of skirts which tempestuous swirl
In foamy eddies, where lightsome whirl
Lithe-moving maidens all laughing gay
Like golden leaves in the wind at play.
Smooth sleepy motion, with rippling sound—
Winds through the hairbells on grassy mound,
Spray on a rock on the summer sea,
Swirl not more soft than that sound may be.
Low-buzzing chatter like bees at work,
Half-whispered nonsense wherein does lurk
Poison and sweetness so subtly mixed
That innocent maidens lie betwixt
Doubt and belief. But words are lost
Where every buoyant thought is tossed

THE WALTZ

On the current. 'Tis the movement fleet
And swinging, the slip of eager feet,
Billowing satins and floating gauze,
Light-swaying motion before the pause,
The brilliant cheeks and the parted lips,
The twinkling toes of the maid that trips,
Seductive figures, rounded and fair,
The gleaming jewels in scented hair,
That call unto youth to take the chance,
While yet it may, to join in the dance.

SONG—"YES"

THE roses are dying, Rosalind—
The roses are dying or dead;
Snow lurks behind the autumn wind,
And the last crimson petals are shed.

The year is dying slowly away,
And the sweet birds that sang have fled
To the warm delights of a southern bay,
Where the roses still glow red.

When this year's roses and birds have passed,
Yet remains the word that you said,
And for all the future bright will last
Your promise that we shall wed.

The whole year's sweetness you did compress
In that word, with all joys ahead,
And though whispered low, your magical "Yes"
Will echo when I am dead.

TO CAPTAIN SCOTT, R.N.

In Memoriam.

Upon her axis has the old world swung,
Since in the sun-warmed air faint music rung
From rustling leaves that waved o'er polar lands.
Since then old Time has shaken out his sands,
And seen vast continents retreat, refurled
Before dissolving waters. While the world
Shifted her angle t'ward the starry skies;
For where the white Antarctica now lies,
Time watched the ancient forests shrinking back
Before the penetrating, soft attack
Of sleepy-fingered cold, whose icy breath
Petrified life until it merged in death.
Then, with the conquered forests covered o'er
By silting muds and sand-encroaching shore,
Were buried secrets that Man yearns to know—
Strange forms extinct entombed in rocks and snow,

TO CAPTAIN SCOTT, R.N.

Upon whose graves the spirits of the night
Dance fantasies in coruscating light.
Their icy queen for epochs held at bay
Truth-seekers who, fool-hardy, came that way;
Until this century has seen Man beat
The Unexplored back from this last retreat.

But the wind-voice cries,
And the wind-force hurls
Death-cloud snows in swirls.
Sharp ice banners rise
Which the wind unfurls;
They gyrate in whorls,
And they flay the prize
While shrill music skirls.
Then the white soul lies
With two priceless pearls
Where had been warm eyes.

And after it peace. Then, in the light
Of the frozen stars, for the eight-months' night
The ghostly echo wails round the Pole
And cries, "But eleven miles from our goal!"

TO CAPTAIN SCOTT, R.N.

God! the white light round the glorious dead
Not only illumines the hero's head,
Its lambent flame has flashed round the earth
Piercing each heart; it has given birth
In a white-hot glow to a reverent pride
In the way that our English heroes died.

February 14, 1913.

(It is perhaps not generally known that Lady Scott, the explorer's wife, and Dr. Marie Stopes, the fossil botanist, were anxious to go with Captain Scott on this last expedition, and that it was seriously discussed whether it would be possible for them to join the party. Dr. Stopes particularly desired to collect the fossil plants and examine the coal deposits which had been reported by Shackleton, in order to obtain much-needed evidence about the forests of extinct plants which once grew in antarctic lands.)

THE EASIER PART

MAN's part—to do ; a woman's part—to be.
Then how much easier to play the man !
All could control their deeds ; 'tis thoughts run riot,
And o'er the moods that breed them few can rule.
Yet by her moods is woman ever judged,
For 'tis her moods that make her very self.

A KING'S REVERIE

How wise, O fool, to dare enjoy
In gardens set with paths the way you will!
How wise, O fool, to dare employ
Laughter as weapon against hate,
And mock at those who grovelling lie
Fawning on Us who are of high estate!
To be a king—what irony!
'Tis only fools who seem to know
How, 'twixt this world's conventions, so to go
As not to shatter trivial human laws.
With the light step of an acknowledged fool,
You, laughing, trample them, but need not pause;
For who says nay when the fool will go
Over forbidden paths? "'Tis but a fool;
Let him pursue his own mad foolish way."
The people shrug, and quickly turn to note
How *I* behave, whose path they know by rote.

A KING'S REVERIE

"Only a fool." Yet there I see
The only man who is really free,
Tied as all are to their sanity,
Their laws and customs—all demands
Of foolish pomp; constrained by hands
That point the way o'er dusty roads
To Us who stagger 'neath golden loads—
While fools live free
'Neath greenwood tree.
Let any fool change place with me!
Then were he fool indeed, while I,
Free, wise at last, from pomp would fly.

A QUEEN DETHRONED

All could see that she was a Queen.
Her loveliness and her noble mien,
Her dignity and her tenderness
(For those she passed she seemed to bless),
Placed her above the common herd,
As did the beauty of every word
She uttered.

Her kingdom was built on Love,
And there she was royal-rich above
The hoards of the richest miser's gold.
She was wealthy with a wealth untold,
With the world at her feet like a golden ball;
For by giving herself, she could give all
The joys of earth and of paradise
Unto one man.

A QUEEN DETHRONED

Not only her beauty in his eyes
Shone like a wonderful starry prize,
But through her being the whole world gleamed
Radiant as he had never dreamed
Mirage of fairy-land could float.
Her finger-touch on his cheek stirred fleet
The flush of his throbbing pulses beat,
While in his ear like a silver note
Her whisper rang.

A crimson petal she gave one day
While in a pretty mood of play,
More precious than a ruby seemed.
When from her eyes fair laughter gleamed,
The heavens could thunder coal-black rain,
Bright in his heart had her sunshine lain.
She saw his joy, and was throbbing glad
Of the magical dower through love she had
For her belovèd.

A happy Queen, she walked secure—
In innocence thinking her throne was sure.
But seeds of misery and of sin
Piercing her lover's heart, crept in

A QUEEN DETHRONED

Till he loved no more. Then one black day
Her high throne tottered and fell away.
Careless, her love from him he cast,
As a garment whose use for him was passed.
And thus, through one man's fealty lost,
Uncounted hosts the border crossed.
Her kingdom fell.

Beauty she still had, but what worth
When the love that saw it had fled the earth?
Without her throne and sceptre, passed
Her Queenship and power, once so vast.
Roses she plucked, but their petals now
Were less than rubies. Her laughter—how
Could it over-rule the tempest's strength?
Stripped of her magic power to give,
Stripped naked of her robe of love
She stood, alone.

Even the richest stores of gold
No real value alone can hold,
And the greater wealth of love must be
Shared, 'ere it has reality.

A QUEEN DETHRONED

Two hearts must hold the treasure fast—
Out of one pair of hands life's blast
Will dash the fragile, glowing joy
Against a stone.

IT IS MORE BLESSÈD TO RECEIVE THAN GIVE

GIVING, of all earth's pleasures, is the best,
And hence most saint-like, blessèd and divine.
One who inspires Love's gift, that soul endows
Love with its life, and brings forth from the deeps
A thousand winged delights, that else were mute,
To soar and carol in another's sky.

The highest rapture in the universe
Is to *feel* love. It is not to be loved.
So haloed and apart, near God Himself,
Stands one who can inspire that glorious joy.
Thus 'tis more *blessèd* to receive than give—
For what does the receiver ever gain?
A golden casket, or a jewelled ring,
A dewy blossom, or a bleeding heart—
Never the rapture of the throbbing soul
That, giving, glows with Love's beatitude.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING

Blessèd and lonely! for it is most rare
That two such souls should meet.
But if the blessèd one does find a mate
A subtle lover, not a simple soul,
That lover, too, will seek inspire the joy
Of giving, in the one who first received,
Even by feigning wants that are not there.
And then a magic circle girds the two,
And gifts to both are symbols of their joy.

THE BROTHER

(This is an absolutely true and unvarnished account of an experience that shook me when I was sixteen, though no one knew of it.)

The love of God was formalized for me
By Church and State and rigid home decree;
I listened while the printed prayers were said
And meekly heard th' appointed service read,
Feeling it sterile, weary, dry, and dead.
While in my heart there lived and bloomed instead
The picture of my father's father's head
Bowed with the Friends in sweet spontaneous prayer.
And with my father's thoughts I, too, prayed there
In whitewashed Meeting-house. And so its calm
And gracious memory was my soul's balm.
My eyes had never seen the sacred place,
But in imagination I could trace
Its aspect; and this heritage was mine,
Unspoiled by earthly knowledge, hence divine.

THE BROTHER

So deep and living was this bond, we two,
Father and I, but seldom said where flew
Our Sabbath-thoughts; but, he and I, we knew
The joy of waiting in the plain wood pew
Till wingèd inspiration should descend,
And make one stand to pray, another bend.
Too sacred for all prying the delight
We took, in secret, of our spirit's flight
Far from the formal, sterile church. I dreamed
Through years of exile of the House that seemed
God's home on earth—a plain, unvarnished room,
Lit by the grave, sweet souls within its gloom.
Through childhood's age-long years I stilled my heart,
Waiting till I could claim to take my part
As an acknowledged Quaker. But I spoke
To none, nor curiosity awoke.
A child is secretive, and knows full well
What are the precious thoughts it *dare* not tell.
At last, when girlhood had to say adieu
To childhood, came the day when first I knew
That I might dare to go and pray alone.
There was a little Meeting-house of stone,

THE BROTHER

Where for a fortnight in the spring we stayed
Down in the country, where the may-flower made
Snow-drifts along the lanes. There no one knew
That I felt like a knight before the grail,
And that the little building made me pale.
The holy dream of years had met me there,
And I stood in the Quaker's House of Prayer.
Ah! what a tawdry, ugly little room,
With oil-lamps feebly lighting its chill gloom!
Why is it I remember all these years
Each detail with a scalding sense of tears?
How crude the shiny green of painted wall,
The stencilled red design, the lamp-stand tall!
I came to meet the Spirit there alone;
These outer faults would not have turned to stone
My girlish heart. And yet I've stayed away
From Meeting-houses from that cruel day.

The Friends assembled, but not clad in grey:
They were not in the peaceful, sweet array
My father loved to say his mother wore;
Their silks were rustling as they passed the door.

THE BROTHER

I sat alone. My heart was still and numb,
Feeling as though my joy were stricken dumb.
Then, toward this nest of comfortable gentry,
A rough-clad workman halted in the entry;
He carried a soft basket made of straw,
With plane and chisel, hammer, nails, and saw.
His heavy, mud-caked boots creaked down the aisle;
Some turned in anger, others turned to smile.
But comfortable folk sat in each seat,
So that he could not find a quick retreat,
But blundered to and fro, and dropped a tool
Right in the aisle. One muttered, "Blundering fool!"
He came near me. I moved and made him way.
Silent he sat beside me; then to pray
An elder stood. He told God that we all
Were brothers in His sight, and since the Fall
Men, great and humble, were alike in sin
Saved only by their Christ, and that within
The fold was no distinction—all in love
Were equal in the eyes of God above.
And then the congregation stood to sing—
Not as the Spirit moved: a numbered thing

Arranged for over-night. But no one brought
A hymn-book for my neighbour, so I sought
The place in mine, and moved beside him. He
Held the one tattered cover. I could see,
Holding the other, how his mud-soiled hand
Trembled; and down the page a grain of sand
Cascaded, gritty, toward the binding thread.
He did not sing, but stood with bowing head.
With rustling satisfaction all sat down;
A lady smoothed the silk of her new gown.
The spirit evidently prearranged
Who was to speak; the order was not changed.
In black, an elder rose, with notes in hand,
And told the people of the Lord's command
That sinners should repent. "Come all," he cried,
"To-night to Jesus—come! His love is tried
For ages past. Come, brothers, seek with me
This love, this pardon, that is given free."
Then he sat down in silence, while none stirred.
Then slowly from his place, with dim eyes blurred,
My neighbour rose, and said in shaky tone,
"Pray for me, sir, I beg you." But alone

THE BROTHER

He stood. With haughty stares the people gaped.
"Pray for me, I implore you!" Then was shaped
In my girl's heart the knowledge, swift and bright,
Of what hypocrisy sits in the light.
"Tut, tut!" was whispered; but he pleading stood.
"Pray for me kindly, sir; I need it sore.
I am a sinner; I can do no more."
A sidesman tried to stop him; no one spoke;
The man who had proclaimed God's love was dumb;
The man who prayed for converts sat there glum.
In anguish then he said, "Oh, pray for me!
To-night I did a murder! Here you see
My hands are bloody. I have killed to-night
A brother. Pray! for I repent aright!"
His head sank forward, but an angry glare
Was levelled at him. None would have a share
In this unseemly scene. And then he sighed;
The carpenter took up his tools, and cried
With silent lips, proclaiming his great need.
Then, stumbling, turned his face toward the door;
But first he stooped, and picked up from the floor
The battered hymn-book he and I had shared,
And said out loudly, while the people stared,

THE BROTHER

"Good-night, my little sister," smiled at me,
Then tiptoed quietly out. And followers three
Saw that he went and gave himself in charge
Of the police. *They* dealt more tenderly;
And soon his soul was sent direct to God.

No other Quaker's Meeting-house I know,
For never to another could I go.
My place of worship is imagined, sweet,
And secret—girlhood's dreams of that retreat
Where father's father worshipped long ago,
Where truly did God's Spirit move below
The sweet, sincere, and simple souls of men.
My vision dreams that time may come again.

REVELATION

THE days of revelation are not passed:
Not many days ago God spake to me.
I had been probing His Infinity,
Fretting my mind with thoughts beyond its ken,
As though this magic world were not enough,
And far too full of wonders for one brain.
The Universe is on another plane,
But, dimly visioned, haunted me with pain;
So, lest my soul should break itself in vain
Striving for what it could not understand,
The Infinite condensed itself for me
To one small voice. And now I rest content,
Waiting to grow beyond this plane of light.

For many months before He deigned to speak
I purged my soul, although I did not pray.
The Godhead one can worship is too great

REVELATION

To need my prayers, and I myself too proud
To ask for daily bread and petty things.
God gives; we do not need to shame the gift
By beggars' whines, nor do we need to bring
Petulant comments of His working world
Before the throne that lies serene within.
God does not even give, but makes our hands
With power to take whatever we can use.
I was prepared to hear the breath divine
By living all my days and all my nights
Wrapped in the loveliness of this rich world.
I lay for days on heathered, sunny mounds,
And listened to the murmurs of the life
That fluttered round me and beneath my feet,
Or soared above my head in glowing blue.
I stooped to kiss the velvet petalled lips
Of flower faces, and I raised my head
To meet the touch of softly-fingered vines.
The silence of this busy, humming life
Sank in my heart, and purged it from the blur
Of city noises and of human strife.
I cried into the silvery, echoing halls,
"Grant me, O Essence, understanding true!

REVELATION

I ask to realize how we should live
Our lives appointed by Thy hidden laws.
Only, O God, grant me—to understand!"

For golden hours one evening I had lain
Upon a bank of sand beside the sea,
Watching the lighting of the deepening sky
By stars that gathered in the purpling west.
Far in the night I lay, breathing my prayer,
And hours had passed in tenseness physical;
My pulses were dissolved and motionless.
Then in the silence came a stillness new,
More absolute than any hush of noise.
It was God's whisper in my secret heart.
He called me to His dwelling high in space
That filled all space, yet seemed above it all,
And showed me there the meaning in the lives
Of everything in all the world's expanse.
In one swift flash my soul embraced it all—
The vastness, and the beauty, and the need
For all the seeming ugliness and pain.
I seemed to hold within my very brain
The brilliance of a Universe undimmed—

REVELATION

A Universe that pulsed and glowed with joy,
And yet that lay in calm tranquillity.
By one swift sight my soul fused with it all,
But in that moment fell again to earth;
It was not ripe to comprehend a world.

Then as I lay upon the golden sand,
Panting with fall so great and dazzled yet,
God's silence spoke again in thoughts beyond
All power of language. At the most I can
Render a fragment in imperfect words
Of all the laws God voiced in wordless phrase.
"If you would understand and live aright,
Do in the world your duty to the world
As men prescribe. In the long past you knew
Less than you know to-day of all My works,
And in the future you will learn again
All that you saw in this swift glimpse through space,
And will forget before to-morrow dawns.
Sometimes in moments visioning long years
You may attain a sight of distant truths,
But through slow stages you must quietly pass
To knowledge. Do not hasten now to grasp

REVELATION

What now you cannot hold, but wait awhile;
And as the periods of Infinity
Pass their allotted points, so, too, will you
Progress from plane to plane, and each time learn
All that you then have won the power to use.
The curtain of the future draws apart
For all to enter at the proper time.
Be tranquil, at the same time that you strive.
I do not ask men's prayers, if they but live
Their lives aright according to their laws.
Their laws fulfil My purpose, and they grow
Towards the light serenely in due time.
The mysteries encircling, all can feel,
Yet cannot ever see, unless they live,
While being men, by higher laws than man's,
And thus do ripe souls rend the veil of flesh.
But do not warp thy earthly life, my child,
For joyous life alone is perfected."

The vision faded with the starlit hours
(And I returned to labour and to play),
But its reflected brilliance lights each day.
And often in the woodlands I can hear